

Letter from Taizé

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Next
*European Meeting in
Vienna*

PROCESSED

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EASTER IN TAIZÉ

In the Presence of the Mystery of Our Resurrection

Christ Jesus, on this day when you place us in the presence of the mystery of our own resurrection, far from wondering at our weak faith, we lean on the faith of the Christians of all the ages, from the Virgin Mary and the apostles down to those of the present day.

In your presence, the Risen Christ, we find a spring of fresh water, and also the energies of love to follow you to the very end by saying a yes that commits our whole life.

And then, how many times do we make this Gospel discovery! Where our childhood or youth have been mistreated and may have experienced profound humiliations, it is there that, in our inner nights, you, the Risen Lord, bathe us in your gentle light.

Brother Roger's Easter Meditation

During the Easter holidays, from April 5 to May 3, 12,000 young people from forty-five countries took part in the week-long meetings in Taizé.

For Easter itself, young people from every continent were present, as well as from most of the countries of Europe, from Scandinavia to Portugal, from Ireland and Eastern Europe. In the middle of the night before Easter morning, there was even the unexpected arrival of a coach of fifty young Lithuanians who came for a week.

On the eve of Easter, Brother Roger spoke of the meaning of the Paschal celebration. "Today we are celebrating the Risen Christ. But who is this Christ? One of the evangelists, John, tells us that even before the beginning of the universe, from all eternity, Christ was in God. And why did he come to earth?"

"Because God wanted to find a way of showing human beings that he is love, and only love. So he came as a poor, humble man, Jesus the Christ. To grasp this mystery, we have such a little faith. But rather than wondering at our weak faith, we can lean on the faith in our resurrection which has been that of Christians of all the ages, from the Virgin Mary and the apostles down to believers of the present day."

Then Brother Roger spoke briefly about the brother who, on Easter morning, would make a commitment of his entire life in the community. "He will speak a yes for all time, eternity's yes. He will live his whole life in celibacy. He will try to respond to the Gospel call to be reconciled each day, in this way living with his brothers a

Free and Responsible

In Taizé and across the world, the Letter from the Philippines, "A Love, Source of Freedom" is being read, re-read and reflected on in small groups. To go along with this reflection, here are some suggestions with Bible texts and questions. A group can take the time to reflect in silence before beginning a discussion. What matters most is listening to one another, not debating ideas or theories, but sharing what each person has understood as most important for his or her own life.

parable of community. He will live in community of goods. We know that no one is naturally built, in the human condition, to live this eternity's yes. If he speaks this yes, if he leans on the trusting of faith, it is only for love of Christ and the Gospel."

During the night, a continuous prayer took place in the church and on Easter morning, the Eucharist was presided by priests from Madagascar, India and Brazil. At the end of the celebration, all the bells began to ring at the moment when the Easter greeting was shared in different languages:

- Christ is risen
- He is truly risen.

To give a better welcome to the young people who will come to Taizé in the next few months, a large field, where a few cows used to graze, and some woods on a steep hill are being set up as spaces of silence. At the foot of the woods, a centuries-old spring, named after St Stephen, will soon be able to be visited for part of each day.

This is because, during some of the summer weeks, the number of young adults coming to Taizé has doubled over the last three years, and so it is important that more areas of silence also be found. The circus tents that used to be in front of the church have now been replaced by wooden constructions; this creates a large unified space for the common prayer.

Week after week, the intercontinental meetings continue until the end of the year. This year, the presence of young people from Eastern Europe will be more diverse than last year: the Romanians will be more numerous, and everything possible is being done to assist young people from the former Soviet Union to come.

During the summer, two weeks, while being like the others and open to all, will have a special character. From August 23-30, the Archbishop of Canterbury will spend a week in Taizé with a thousand young Anglicans who will take part in the usual meeting. And from August 30 to September 6, a Franciscan week will be held in Taizé, with the Father General and a number of Franciscan priests, brothers and sisters as well as some Poor Clares.

The next European meeting of young people will take place at the end of December and the beginning of January in Vienna, Austria. To prepare for this European meeting, Brother Roger will spend Christmas in a large city of Eastern Europe.¶

If sometimes there seems to be a contradiction between freedom and responsibility, it is that not because we forget to see their common root, the presence of Christ with us? "If you knew that God always comes to you...", the Letter from the Philippines reminds us.

In the story of Jesus' meeting with Zacchaeus, Luke 19,1-10, we see how the simple presence of Christ enables Zacchaeus to change his life completely. Jesus looks at Zacchaeus in such a way that his aspirations are brought to light. Jesus thus places himself in the position of someone who needs something: he needs hospitality from that man whom nobody wants to visit.

Jesus makes no criticisms; all he says is "Zacchaeus, come down quickly; I have to stay with you today." Seeing that he is appreciated, Zacchaeus can dare to believe that it is possible for him to find a place in the midst of his people. This intimacy that is possible with Christ opens the road of solidarity for him. He becomes free to give with joy.

When we welcome Christ, we discover a new relationship with him. On the eve of his death, Jesus describes this to his disciples using the image of the vine and the branches (John 15,7-15). "I am the vine and you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, and I in them, will bear much fruit" (v. 5). Jesus offers this unimaginable gift: to receive his own strength of life and love, just as the branch receives everything from the trunk. In spite of its frailty, it is the branch that bears the fruit.

And what does this gift of Jesus produce?

- It leads each person to be fully themselves, bearing fruit, that is, not serving themselves, but others.

- It makes us grow in freedom, by offering a new relationship with God in filial trust: "Ask whatever you will...", "I no longer call you servants,...but friends."

- It communicates a joy, a joy which is not only possible but which is the only joy that is truly complete, a joy that is in God from all eternity, in the mutual love of Father and Son: "May my joy be in you, and may your joy be complete...."

- It places in us that love which is in Christ: "This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this: giving one's life for one's friends" (v. 12-13). By using the word "commandment," Jesus takes up an Old Testament term linked to the notion of covenant. God makes a commitment, a covenant, by proposing "commandments" that delineate a space in which this covenant is lived to the full.

You can re-read the first part of the letter "A Love, Source of Freedom" and reflect on the following questions:

Who are the persons whose life speaks to us because they take on responsibilities and resist the harshest upheavals?

What helps me to welcome Christ with trust and joy?

In trying to welcome Christ, what freedom do I discover, and what responsibility for others?

"I am very moved that we were able to share our experiences," said a young Korean after a weekend meeting in his country. "In our culture, it is very difficult to be open to others. In addition, there is such a strong social pressure that we do not take the time to meet."



The Intercontinental Meetings in Taizé

The meetings of young adults in Taizé are held around the community of brothers. With them, all the participants meet three times each day for a time of common prayer in the church. Coming to Taizé is a personal decision to go to a place to look for the living springs of God. The presence of young people from different continents engaged in a common search makes each week an intercontinental meeting.

For young people between 17 and 30 : Week-long meetings throughout the year. Plan to arrive Sunday afternoon and leave the following Sunday at noon. It is also possible to come for a weekend, from Friday evening to Sunday noon. Those who come with a group are invited to split up so as to meet with people from other countries.

Those who wish can choose a group that, in addition to Bible introductions and small-group sharing, takes care of a lot of the practical work. It is also possible to spend a week in silence, to let the Gospel shed light on your life, with a daily Bible introduction and personal conversations with a brother or a sister. These choices are made when you arrive. For some young people it can be important to stay a second or a third week, for a time of silence or to help with the practical work. Those who would like to do this should speak with a brother or sister during their first week in Taizé.

The minimum age for taking part in meetings is normally 17, but young people who are 15 or 16 are welcome at certain times: for example Easter and half-term holidays. It is also possible for groups who come during the summer to include a small number of 15-16 year olds: please write to ask. Adults who accompany young people under 17 (at least 1 adult for every 8 young people) help the brothers with the anima-

tion. They will stay with their group for sleeping, eating and the meetings, so that the young people can be helped to participate fully. (For those under 17 years old, one week only.)

Adults over 30 are invited for a week (Sunday to Sunday) between Easter and the beginning of November. Throughout the year, they can come for a weekend, from Friday evening to Sunday noon. They form a group with Bible introductions, times of silence and small-group sharing, and take meals together. So that we can welcome all those who wish to come, people are asked to limit themselves to one stay per year. Large groups should not be composed of adults only, but include young people as well. Because of lack of room, elderly persons who need accommodation in Taizé itself are asked not to come in July and August. It is necessary to write ahead, mentioning the dates you wish to come, the number of persons and their ages, and to wait for a reply.

Parents and children : From the end of June to the beginning of September, each week, there is a separate family group. Plan to arrive on Sunday (beginning at 3PM) and leave the following Sunday. The children take part in some of the activities. It is important to prepare them for this week of prayer and meetings. Parents take charge among themselves of day care for the smaller children. As far as possible, come with a tent or a caravan and indicate this on your registration form, along with the ages of the children. It is useful to bring a Bible.

Accommodation

Living conditions are simple. If possible bring a tent, especially at Easter, Pentecost and in the summer. Under 30 years of age : in tents or, in the winter, in heated dormitories (boys and girls separate). Bring sleeping bag, air-mattress, blankets. Over 30 years of age : according to age, in dormitories or rooms with two or more beds, in Taizé or, when necessary, in nearby vil-

lages. Accommodation will be given upon arrival. Bring sheets or sleeping bag.

Participation in the costs

The Taizé Community has no investments and accepts no gifts or donations, not even family inheritances or other bequests. Its only revenue comes from its work. By its work, the community covers not only its own expenses, but also a portion of the expenses of welcoming young people ; the community receives no funding from any organization for this. Support comes solely from participants' contributions for the costs of each day. Those who are able can contribute to a solidarity fund which enables young people who cannot pay for their stay, and sometimes even for their journey, to be welcomed. Participation in the costs covers meals, lodging and other costs of the welcome. Exchange rates are different in every country, so one amount cannot apply to everyone. Everyone contributes, when they arrive, according to their possibilities. Currencies of different countries vary in value, so the amount people contribute varies. Suggested prices, in French Francs per day, for young people under thirty years old: GB, NZ: 30 to 37, Scand.: 36 to 43, IRL: 26 to 33, USA, Can., Aus.: 39 to 46. For adults over 30, in French Francs per day: GB, NZ: 66-94 (in tent), 80-105 (dormitory), 96-120 (room). Scand: 74-105 (in tent), 89-120 (dormitory), 105-135 (room). IRL: 57-77 (tent), 67-87 (dormitory), 83-103 (room). USA, Can., Aus.: 84-115 (tent), 94-125 (dormitory), 110-140 (room). Those who wish, in addition, to give to the Solidarity Fund can do so while at Taizé or by sending a contribution in French Francs payable to "Taizé - Solidarity Fund".

Medical insurance : If possible bring the necessary form (E 1-11 for the European Community) for medical expenses to be reimbursed in France.

Registration : Send the enclosed registration form. It is helpful if those who are able choose to come in early July, late August, or in September, rather than the last week of July or the first week of August.

Registration form

to be sent to:
Meetings, TAIZE-COMMUNITY, 71250 CLUNY, France.
Tel: (+33) 85 50 30 02, Fax (+33) 85 50 30 16

Scissors icon indicating where to cut.

First Name : _____

Family Name : _____

Address : _____

(with post code and country)

Telephone : Occupation : Age :

I wish to participate in the meetings from to

(Please circle "yes" or "no")

Will bring my own tent : yes / no

Means of transport: Nuneaton Coaches other coach minibus car train other :

For the disabled, adult group-leaders, those who cannot sleep on the floor, please fill in the following:

I need a bed yes/no. If "yes" please circle below who you are:

woman man couple family with children disabled person helper of disabled person

(age of the children :)

I receive the Letter of Taizé : yes / no

I have already been to Taizé : yes / no (last stay : month year)

“The Hymn to Charity”

(1 Corinthians 13)

“The hymn to charity” (1 Cor 13) is one of the best-known Bible texts. There is one element, however, that often escapes the reader’s attention. The apostle Paul insists more on what distinguishes love from all the other goods (v. 1-3 & 8-13) than on what separates it from evil (v. 4-7). Love is a “way surpassing all others” (12,31). It is not so much the good that is opposed to evil as the best of all good things. Why is Paul so insistent about distinguishing love, which he calls “perfect,” from other good gifts of God that he refers to as “provisional” (v. 9-10)?

Before encountering Christ, Paul was already deeply attached to the good. He said of himself that he was “blameless” with respect to what the Law required (Phil 3,6). He resembled the young man in the Gospel who asked, “What good thing can I do?” (Matt 19,16) and who, when he heard once again, from Jesus’ mouth, the commandments, could reply, “I have done all that” (Matt 19,20). From the beginning, Paul was full of zeal for the good God proposed in the Law to be accomplished and for evil to be rejected.

But when Jesus, the man he despised because he underwent evil on a cross, called him in the dazzling light of the Resurrection, everything changed for Paul. Yes, in his earthly existence, Jesus did not accomplish his mission as Messiah the way the prophets described it. He did not eradicate all wars and injustices. He did not cause people to obey the commandments perfectly. But in him, there is much more glory and perfection than anywhere else. This is because there is that which does not cease when activity stops and words are silent – the love which “believes all things, hopes all things, bears all things” (1 Cor 13,7). The love shown by Christ on the cross is the presence of the eternal God. Referring to the darkness that occurred

when Jesus hung on the cross, the Armenian liturgy says that “created light passed into the shadow of the Light that creates.”

From then on, Paul was detached from the great goods of his past (cf. Phil 3,4-8) and of his present. Not that he was unable to see the true worth of his own gifts and those of the newly founded Churches. But these gifts are all part of what is “passing,” just as the activity of Jesus, which came to an end on the cross, “passed into the shadow of the Light that creates.” Risen from the dead, Christ completes what he had left incomplete in his earthly existence. By pouring his love into our hearts, he never ceases to accomplish what our greatest abilities can only begin to suggest.

At the beginning of his letter, Paul

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rejoices with the Corinthians that they have been “enriched in every way, in speaking and in knowledge” (1,5). Here, the comparison between childhood and adulthood (13,11) suggests that nevertheless, for him all these activities are like the babbling of children. In the light of love, all the efforts made by believers are revealed to be both imperfect and full of promise, like childhood itself.

It is essential never to reproach a child for not acting like an adult. But in fact, we are all like children whose growth has not yet reached maturity (cf. Eph 4,13). A lot of what is done in the Church is awkward and would be unbearable if it were to last forever. But to those who would be scandalized by this, Paul says, “let us stop passing judgement on one another” (Rom 14,13). It is not a question of approving something wrong but of viewing things, like a child, in the light of the future.

Consenting to the imperfection of all our undertakings has nothing to do with becoming resigned to mediocrity. On the contrary, the certainty that what is now incomplete will disappear one day in the light of Christ is a source of freedom. The Fathers of the Church liked to compare the Church to the moon that shines brightly in the night but whose light will merge, at the dawning of eternity, with that of the sun, of Christ. The imperfect and poorly polished mirrors of antiquity to which Paul refers (v. 12) reflected an image, but one that was so clouded that it only made people all the more desirous to see “face to face.”

Striving toward the fullness of Christ’s love keeps us from becoming anxious because of the imperfections of the present. But love never causes true life to wait until later. Right “now” it gives meaning to so many awkward gestures; today, it enables us to “know the power of the resurrection” (Phil 3,10).⁵

MEDITATING ON THE WORD

JULY

JOHANNINE HOURS

LUKE 6,36-38

These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the one in bold type is suggested.

Johannine hours are meant as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer in the midst of our daily life. During the course of a day, take an hour or so to read the Bible passage with the short commentary and to reflect on the questions which follow. Afterwards, a group of 3 to 10 people can meet to share what they have discovered and perhaps for a time of prayer.

1 WED Hos 6.2-6 Mt 9.18-26
Let us strive to know the Lord; that he will come is as certain as the dawn. He will come to us like the rain of springtime upon the earth.

2 THU Mt 9.35-38 Hos 11.7-9
At the sight of the crowds Jesus was moved to compassion, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

3 FRI Ep 2.19-22 Jn 20.24-29
St THOMAS
You are part of God's household. You are built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, and Christ Jesus himself is the cornerstone.

4 SAT Mt 10.17-25 Hos 12.10-11
Jesus said: When you are handed over, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. What you are to say will be given to you when the time comes, for it is not you who will be speaking but the Spirit of your Father will be speaking in you.

5 SUN Lk 10.1-20 Is 66.10-14
Jesus said: The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. So pray that the Lord of the harvest may send out workers into his harvest.

6 MON Is 40.1-5 Mt 10.39-42
Isaiah said: Prepare a way through the desert for the Lord. Make a straight road for our God.

7 TUE Mt 11.1-6 Is 40.6-8
Jesus said: Go back and report what you hear and see: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the dead are raised to life, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.

8 WED Is 40.9-11 Mt 11.7-15
The Lord tends his flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart.

9 THU Mt 11.25-27 Is 40.25-28
Jesus said: I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for having revealed to little children what you have hidden from the learned and clever.

10 FRI Is 40.29-31 Mt 11.28-30
Those who hope in the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall run and not grow weary, they shall walk and not be tired.

11 SAT Is 41.8-10 Mt 12.1-8
The Lord says to his people: I took you from the ends of the earth, I have chosen you and will not cast you off. Fear not, for I am with you.

12 SUN Lk 10.25-37 Dt 30.11-14
Having told the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus asked the teacher of the law, "Who showed themselves to be a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" He replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

13 MON Is 41.17-20 Mt 12.9-14
The Lord says: When the oppressed and needy search for water and there is none, I the Lord will answer them. I shall not forsake them. I will open rivers upon the barren heights and fountains in the valleys.

14 TUE Is 42.5-7 Mt 12.15-21
The Lord says to his servant: I have called you in righteousness. I will take care of you by the hand and shape you. I will make you a light to the nations.

15 WED Mt 12.46-50 Is 43.1-4
Jesus said: Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.

16 THU Is 43.10-13 Mt 13.1-9
You yourselves are my witnesses, declares the Lord, you are the servant whom I have chosen.

17 FRI Mt 13.10-23 Is 43.18-20
Jesus said: The seed which was sown in good soil is like someone who hears the Word and understands it; that person bears fruit.

18 SAT Is 44.21-23 Mt 13.24-30
Sing for joy, O heavens, for the Lord has acted! Mountains, burst into song, for the Lord has redeemed his people!

19 SUN Lk 10.38-42 Gn 18.1-10
Jesus said to Martha: You are worried and upset about many things, and yet few are needed, indeed only one.

20 MON Is 45.2-6 Mt 13.31-32
The Lord says: Though you did not know me, I have called you by your name.

21 TUE Mt 13.33-35 Is 45.18-19
The Lord says: The kingdom of heaven is like the yeast a woman took and mixed in with a large amount of flour until the whole thing rose.

22 WED Jn 20.1/11-18 Rm 8.28-30
The Risen Christ said to Mary of Magdala: Go and find my brothers and tell them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.

23 THU Is 45.22-24 Mt 13.44-46
There is no other God but me, says the Lord. Turn to me and you will be saved, all you ends of the earth.

24 FRI Mt 14.13-21 Is 46.3-9
Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, Jesus gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, who gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied.

25 SAT 2 Co 4.7-11 Mt 20.20-28
St JAMES
St. Paul writes: We are hard-pressed on every side, but not crushed; we see no way out, but we never despair. We always carry in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be revealed there too.

26 SUN Lk 11.1-13 Col 2.12-14
Jesus said: Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.

27 MON Is 48.20-21 Mt 16.21-23
Announce this with shouts of joy and proclaim it to the ends of the earth: the Lord has redeemed his servant.

28 TUE Mt 16.24-28 Is 49.13-15
Jesus said: If anyone wants to follow me, let them renounce themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

29 WED Mt 18.1-5 Is 50.4-7
Jesus said: Truly, I tell you, the one who makes himself humble like a little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

30 THU Mt 18.19-22 Is 52.13-15
Peter asked Jesus, "How many times should I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "Not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

31 FRI Mt 19.16-22 Is 53.1-5
Jesus said to a rich young man: If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.

A secret fear has always been an obstacle to the joyfulness that is so essential for living, the fear of being condemned by others, by one's own conscience, or even by God. But the words of Christ open up a brand-new reality: the Gospel sheds light on a way of life where the fear of judgement and condemnation is no more. Elsewhere Christ assures those who listen to his words that "they will not be judged" (John 5,24). The same promise is found in our passage: "You will not be judged...you will not be condemned" (v. 37). The passive voice means, according to the custom of the time, that God is the subject of the sentence, which should therefore be understood: God will not judge you.

So when Jesus says, "Do not judge," it is as if he is saying: if you want to remain in a life freed from fear and not lose the serene joy of the Gospel, you know the way: Do not condemn, forgive. In affirming that the measure we use to measure others is identical with God's measure for us (once again the passive implies that God is the subject), Christ gives us something beyond our wildest dreams, the power to enter into an intimate relationship with God. And have we not encountered women and men whose profound kindness and generosity make them obvious friends of God? Human love and forgiveness lead to the limitless compassion of God.

- Where do I recognize in my life traces of God's compassion?
- In what situations does the forgiveness I offer to others free me from my own fears?

MEDITATING ON THE WORD

AUGUST

JOHANNINE HOURS

LUKE 6,43-45

These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the one in bold type is suggested.

1 SAT Is 54.10-14 Mt 19.23-26
The Lord says to his people: You will be founded in justice and free from oppression: fear shall no longer have any hold over you.

2 SUN Jn 6.24-35 Col 3.1-4
The people asked Jesus, "What must we do to do God's work?" Jesus replied, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

3 MON 1 Co 1.1-9 Mt 19.27-29
God is faithful and has called you to live in communion with his Son, Jesus Christ.

4 TUE 1 Co 1.17-25 Mt 20.1-16
We proclaim Christ crucified, which to the nations is foolishness, but to those whom God has called it is Christ, the power and the wisdom of God.

5 WED 1 Co 1.26-31 Mt 20.17-19
God chose things that by human standards are weak to confound the strong. God chose what is lowly and despised in the eyes of the world.

6 THU Lk 9.28-36 2 P 1.16-19
TRANSFIGURATION
Jesus took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his face changed. Then a cloud enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud saying: This is my Son, the Chosen One; listen to him.

7 FRI 1 Co 2.6-12 Mt 20.29-33
We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit that comes from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us

8 SAT 1 Co 3.5-16 Mt 21.1-11
Do you not know that you are God's temple and that the Spirit of God lives in you?

9 SUN Lk 12.32-34 Ws 18.6-9
Jesus said: Give to those in need. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure that will not fail, in heaven where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

10 MON 1 Co 3.18-23 Mt 21.28-32
Paul writes: All things are yours; but you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God.

11 TUE 1 Co 4.1-5 Mt 22.15-22
Paul writes: Judge nothing prematurely, but wait until the Lord comes.

12 WED 1 Co 4.9-13 Jn 3.1-8
We are fools for Christ. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we offer comfort in return.

13 THU Jn 3.9-17 1 Co 12.4-11
God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

14 FRI Jn 3.25-36 1 Co 12.12-25
The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.

15 SAT Lk 1.39-56 1 Co 15.20-27
THE VIRGIN MARY
Mary said: My soul praises the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has been mindful of his humble servant.

16 SUN Lk 12.49-50 Heb 12.1-4
Jesus said: I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already burning!

17 MON Jn 4.1-14 1 Co 12.26-31
Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: If you only knew what God is offering and who it is who is saying to you, "Give me something to drink", you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.

18 TUE 1 Co 13.1-7 Jn 4.14-26
Even if I can understand all mysteries and know all things, even if I have the faith to move mountains, if I am without love I am nothing.

19 WED 1 Co 13.8-13 Jn 4.27-42
Paul writes: These three things remain: Faith, hope and love. And the greatest of them is love.

20 THU 2 Co 1.1-7 Jn 4.43-54
Just as the sufferings of Christ overflow into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.

21 FRI 2 Co 1.18-22 Jn 5.1-9
God has set his seal on us and has put his Spirit in our hearts as a pledge for what is to come.

22 SAT 2 Co 3.1-8 Jn 5.10-18
God has made us able to serve a new covenant, one which is not of written letters but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

23 SUN Is 66.18-21 Jn 6.60-69
The Lord says: I am coming to gather the people of every nation and language, and they will see my glory.

24 MON Ga 2.16-21 Jn 1.45-51
Paul writes: It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

25 TUE Jn 8.1-11 Ga 3.23-29
Jesus said to the woman who had been brought before him: "Where are those who were accusing you? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir", she said. "Neither do I condemn you", said Jesus, "Go, and sin no more."

26 WED Ga 4.1-7 Jn 8.12
God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father!"

27 THU Jn 10.1-10 Ga 5.1/13-18
Jesus said: I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.

28 FRI Ga 5.22-25 Jn 10.11-15
Since the Spirit is our life, let our actions be guided by the Spirit.

29 SAT Jn 14.1-6 Ga 6.6-10
Jesus said: I have not let your hearts be troubled. You trust in God, trust also in me.

30 SUN Lk 14.1-14 Si 3.17-29
Jesus said: When you have a dinner, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind, and you will be blessed, for they have no means to repay you.

31 MON Ep 1.1-6 Lk 4.14-22
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every kind of spiritual blessing.

Johannine hours are meant as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer in the midst of our daily life. During the course of a day, take an hour or so to read the Bible passage with the short commentary and to reflect on the questions which follow. Afterwards, a group of 3 to 10 people can meet to share what they have discovered and perhaps for a time of prayer.

Jesus' remark concerning the tree and its fruits at first appears banal. He tells his hearers nothing new by saying that thornbushes do not produce figs nor brambles grapes. And he adds what seems equally evident: a good person produces good from the good treasure of her heart, while an evil person produces evil from his store of evil. What is surprising, however, is this: many people would agree with this statement without realizing its consequences. They hold, in fact, a different view of things, thinking that, yes, of course, people should do good, even though deep down they are evil. It is not uncommon for people to remind us insistently of our duty to do good and to make a better world while explaining that in reality we are incapable of this on account of the radical evil within us.

How far the Gospel is from this kind of pessimism which leads to absurdity! Christ was not naive; he did not close his eyes to the reality of evil and the power of sin in the depths of the human being. But for him, it was obvious that only a good tree could produce good fruit. In other words, we can expect love, joy, peace, kindness and many other precious fruits only if human beings have a real possibility of being truly good. And in fact, Christ speaks of the good treasure in the heart of the good person as a reality whose existence is scarcely more surprising than that of the good tree. For he came to fulfill by his forgiveness the promise of the prophets: I will give you a new heart; I will set a new spirit within you... I will set my Spirit within you and will make you able to follow my commandments (Ezek 36,26-27).

- What sustains our confidence that God places in the heart of each person a good treasure?
- How can I keep watch over my heart and let its fountain of life spring up without being afraid that a destructive evil will come forth?

Living in Trust

For several months, Taizé brothers have been travelling across the United States to prepare the North American meeting in Dayton, Ohio (May 21-25). Last autumn, two of them crossed the Midwest. They travelled more than 10,000 kilometres by car for gatherings of prayer and reflection on trust and reconciliation with people of a great diversity of backgrounds. Chicago, East Saint Louis, Miami with Hispanic Americans...all stages of a "pilgrimage of trust."

"We need a sign of hope and reconciliation now": everywhere this longing was expressed, especially in the poorest areas, where unemployment and racism are felt the most.

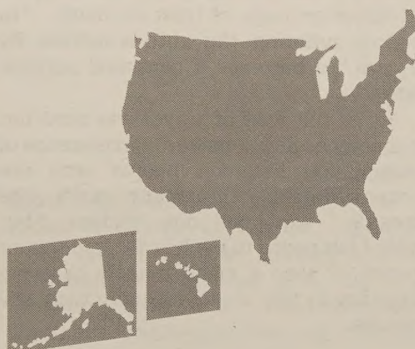
Young adults from different ethnic backgrounds, who never meet, came together at the end of March for a day of prayer and reflection in the largest African-American parish of Chicago. In Canada, a prayer around the cross brought together several hundred young people in the centre of Toronto. The next day, they met to prepare for the meeting in Dayton.

The Bible was read in several languages: recent immigrants, including some Chinese from Hong Kong, felt themselves welcome. Interest in the meeting in Dayton was particularly strong in Canada, as if the present period of uncertainty and tensions made clearer the urgent need to come together.

A girl from Quebec wrote: "There will be many young Canadians going to Dayton, but they will represent only a tiny part of those who have been touched by the preparation. Diversity will be the touchstone: French-speakers and English-speakers, native peoples and Innuits, Canadians from different backgrounds and language groups, young people from all the Christian traditions coming from the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic seacoasts.

"Local initiatives are a source of trust, hope and joy: a parish that created a solidarity fund to enable young people from faraway to take part in the

Dayton meeting, a university that opened its doors for the first time to the Christian message, a local ecumenical prayer that plans to continue, young people who welcome others from city to city on the road to Dayton, the support of local Church leaders or simply the awakening of the desire for God in a heart."



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In the United States, there is often mistrust between young people of different races. Relationships, when they exist, are fragile.

"In learning to trust we have a really long way to go," writes a young woman from Milwaukee. "We cannot expect a deep level of trust between people to suddenly be built up overnight. What is going on in my neighborhood could be compared to what I experienced in Prague last year: people coming together, learning a lot about each other and about themselves, listening to everything going on around them, risking talking about themselves and about things important to them.

"It wasn't simply a matter of discussing race or culture, although those questions were always implicit and seemed to undergird many of our discussions. Rather, our personal backgrounds presented a framework in which we could ask the deeper questions: What does it mean to live as an authentic human being, an authentic Christian in the world today? How do we come to a common understanding, when even the way in which we ask questions and what we are listening for is so different?

"What it always seemed to boil down to was that we already felt that there was something common among us which had drawn us together, and which made us feel very much at ease in being together. Forming deeper friendships would require taking risks and having a great deal of patience, but it seemed at least that it was possible."

"The preparation of the meeting," explained a boy from Dayton, "has brought the Christians of Dayton together in a way that I have never seen before. Like many American cities, Dayton has been so segregated by race and economic status that it is an encouragement for me to see this melt away in the face of Christ. I would never have thought that such a simple prayer, such a simple message, a "pilgrimage of trust," could have such a profound effect."



listening to the continents

Korea

A great sense of solidarity

In Seoul, which now has a population of ten million, the number of poor people is constantly growing. Many of us are working with them, living with them, sharing their lives as neighbours. We have begun a cooperative kindergarten, with study rooms for children both of whose parents are working, and a "house of rice" which serves inexpensive meals. When areas of the city are reconstructed, these people are thrown out of their homes which are destroyed.

Seeing that it was hopeless to try and help them to fight against this, we decided to come to live with them. How can we not be just teachers of their children, people who come to help them? To be truly close to them, I decided to work like them, like the day-workers who look for work each morning. That is how they live, with no security and with no respect either for their work or for themselves.

Some of us have begun to meet, to share about our lives, our hopes, even if despair is never far away. Their simplicity is a great source of strength, because they have a great sense of solidarity, and sometimes there is even the atmosphere of community of an agricultural society. For them, it is natural to share in the suffering of their neighbours. In them, I recognize the values of the Gospel.

Many of those with whom we live are not Christian. We do not try to convert them, but we do not hesitate to witness that our commitment and our lives are rooted in faith. In living with the poor in this way, when fear is present, I get back trust through prayer. I understood in Taizé how contemplative prayer can give the strength to live in this way, to dis-

cover Christ and to witness to him among my co-workers and among the poor, simply and faithfully.

Taiwan

A likeable crowd

In March, we came together for a prayer in the small church of Siang Shan. There were people from neighboring parishes, from the Protestant churches and also non-Christians from the area. As a result of a simple decoration, the Church full of young people sitting on the floor was beautiful and awakened a sense of mystery.

A powerful moment was the prayer around the cross: often tears flowed on the faces of those who came up to the cross to pray in silence and place their lips on it. Human suffering was thus united to the passion of Christ. We had chosen the following theme, in the spirit of the pilgrimage of trust on earth: "In human suffering, the truth is hidden. By it, our life becomes a continual pilgrimage."

For all this form of prayer was new, but it made possible a powerful experience of communion between people who are very different. "I usually don't like crowds," explained one student, "but here I felt peace in my heart." In our poor parish, it was a small miracle to come together in this way with more than 150 people.

Burkina Fasso

Senegal

"With a small team of girls, we met together in a village to reflect on Lent. We also discussed the place of women in society and in the Church. To reflect on this topic, some Muslim women were with us.

Since it is the season of Ramadan, it was beautiful to see that at the same time both communities were reflecting on their life as believers, on their relationship with God. When we celebrate the end of Ramadan, it will also be a celebration for Christians, for in the neighbourhoods, when a family close by celebrates, everyone takes part. Then the festival of Easter will come."

At the same time, the Pope was in Senegal, and young people who welcomed him wrote, "The Pope's visit confirmed the good relationship between Muslims and Christians in Senegal. He insisted on meeting Islamic and tradi-

tional leaders. All of the young people of Senegal wanted to welcome him. And the Pope's message was for us a call to dialogue between Christian and Muslim youth. This dialogue already exists, but it must be broadened and deepened."

Haiti

So many discouraged faces

A few weeks after the coup d'etat we received this message:

"All at once, all our trees of hope, struggle, democracy and future towards the promised land have lost their leaves. It is very hard now to build a life of solidarity, as we experienced in Taizé with people from every country who I know are supporting us. I see around me so many discouraged faces. It's like someone who, building a house, sees it carried away by a cyclone one day.

"But the people of Haiti stands firm once more because we know that God cannot abandon a child taking its first steps. We have to live this revolution with God. The revolution of peacemakers leads to a true evangelization. Let us pray together that the Kingdom of God may come in Yugoslavia, in Zaire, in Cambodia, in Haiti and everywhere on earth."

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